

Our Saviour standing at the Door.

A
SERMON

PREACHED

At the HAGUE in HOLLAND,

BEFORE THE

States-General

OF THE

United Provinces,

UPON

The Twenty first day of *October* last past,

CONCERNING

The Sad and late Dreadful *Inundation*.

By *Frederick Spanheim*.

And since Rendred into English for Publick Benefit,

By *W. L.*

LONDON,

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2 King. 7.
19.

Gen. 45.
26.

1 Sam. 4.
18.

the Severe behaviour of the Almighty against us, and the great Alterations and Changes which happen upon the face of the Earth, we reason with our selves in like manner, and think that either Providence or Our selves are mistaken: We are ready to say, *How doth God know?* And, *Is there Knowledge in the Most High?* Nay, we do not only doubt of his Providence, but also of his Power likewise. And when his Prophets and Ministers denounce Judgments against us, we cry out with that Incredulous Captain, *If the Lord should make windowes in Heaven could such a thing be?* Beloved, If we were ready to fall into so great a misbelief of the Knowledge and Power of the Almighty, without doubt 'tis when we see the great Changes, Desolations, and heavy Judgments which this Common-Wealth hath for some time since lay groaning under: But more especially this last Heavy and Dreadful One, by which as by a Second Deluge the Almighty for our unexpiable Sins seems to threaten an utter Destruction, and ready to destroy the poor leavings of a Merciless Enemy. And I am very sure there are but few here but what thought or have been ready to say in like manner, *If the Lord should bring a Deluge upon us, could such a thing be?* When we hear of or receive any good thing contrary to our expectation, it ravishes our Hearts even to an Exstasie: witness good *Jacob*, who hearing his Son *Joseph* was living, *his Heart failed, for he believed them not.* In like manner when Evils come upon us unawares, unlooked for, they do not only surprize us, but amaze and confound us: So *Eli* when he heard the Ark of God was taken, *He fell backwards from his Seat and brake his Neck.* Beloved, I think our heavy Misfortunes and Disgraces under which we have long suffered, are nothing inferiour to any; but we have been stupify'd with Sin, we have

not

not felt Gods Rod, we have been deaf to his Voice; he hath knocked at our Doors with the Cannons of our Enemies, but we would not hear him: but have sent him back again, and grieved the Spirit of God. And now, *Beloved*, we see him coming once more towards us in an Element more mercileſs then the Fire of our Enemies; you ſee him ſtanding at all your Doors, and crying out to you One of the *Seven Provinces*, as he did here in the Text to one of the Seven Churches of *Asia*, *Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock.*

Beloved, Let me deſire you then all in this ſad conjuncture, but more eſpecially at this preſent, to open your hearts and ears, and conſider with all Attention,

First, What Perſon this is who ſpeaks thus to us, as he is deſcribed in the beginning of this Epistle.

Secondly, The entry and manner of his Diſcourſe and Action in this word, *Behold!*

Thirdly and laſtly, the Action it ſelf, which *St. John* represents to us two wayes:

1. *I ſtand at the Door.*

2. *I knock.*

It is a matter of no little importance to us to know the quality of him that ſpeaks to us: for the Audience and Reception of a Prince or an Ambaſſadour, are far different from thoſe of an inferiour degree. And as Kings and Princes alwayes ſet forth their Titles and Dignities in their Proclamations and Ediſts, as for Example; The *Persian* Monarchs ſtyl'd themſelves *King of Kings*; The *Ceſars* affected the Titles of *Gods*, *Auguſt*, and *Invincible*; The *Turkiſh* Emperours to be call'd *Almighty*; And to be ſhort, Thoſe of *China*, *The beloved Sons of God*: Even ſo our Saviour at the beginning of this Epistle ſtyles himſelf, (but far more

truly) *The Amen, The Faithful Testimony, The true, and the Beginning of God's Creatures.*

He calls himself the *Amen*, because in him all the Promises of God are *Yea*, and *Amen*. He who is the *Amen* or Truth in the Abstract; He who says *Amen* to his Father's Will and Pleasure: And lastly, To whose Commands the whole Church and every good Christian cries *Amen*.

He styles himself likewise a *Testimony*, that is to say, of his Father's Will, of his Obedience: a Testimony of his Grace and the Truth of the Church: and lastly, a Witness of our Deportment, and most private Thoughts; having eyes like the Rings the Prophet *Ezekiel* speaks of round about.

He calls Himself *Faithful*, both as a Husband, a Friend, a Pledge, a King, and a Priest. Faithful in his Love, Faithful in his Alliance, Faithful in his Promises, in his Assistance and good Works.

He calls himself *True*, as in other places the *Truth*, because he is *True* in his Divinity, *True* in his Humanity, in his Offices, *True* in his Promises, Predictions and Threatnings.

Col. 1. 5-17. Lastly, He calls himself *The Beginning of the Creatures of God*; or rather who is before all Creatures; the first as well as the last; the *Alpha* as well as *Omega*: who likewise gave the beginning to all Creatures, and founded the Earth from the Beginning. Who hath Created us by his Word, Defends us by his Power, Protects us by his Providence, who nourishes us by his Labours, Enlightens us by his Spirit, Saves us by his Merit: and if I may be so bold as to make the Comparison, I think he is not much unlike the Figure of Eternity describ'd in the Ancient Medals; for there under the Emblem of a Virgin, a Type of *Sincerity*, was signify'd *Truth*: *Faith* was represented.

sented by her leaning on a Lance, an Emblem of *Strength*: *The Beginning of all Creatures* was typify'd by her having her Head covered; her having one foot set upon a Globe, to shew her Power over the corruptible World, which is God's Creature.

Be ye Judges then my *Beloved*, if He who speaks to us here in the Text, He who stands at our Doors and knocks; He who is so far above and beyond any Monarchs upon Earth in Dignity and Honour; Judge ye, I say, whether he is not worthy our Audience and Reception. Sayes he, *Behold, I stand at the door*. A phrase often used in Scripture when mention is made of any great Affair or Important, tending to the good of our poor Souls: Then, I say, God awakens us with a *Loe, Behold*. Man hath no need of this *Memorandum* to awaken him when there is any Earthly Interest in the Case, as *Ambition*, *Avarice*, or the like; at such times his Eyes are alwayes open, his Ears attentive, and his Mind and Thoughts Active: Nay, even in his Bed his Thoughts are still waking; he slumbers even as the Hare or Crane: But when there is any mention of Heavenly things, of Grace, of the Duty of sinful Man, of the Happiness of the World to come, then there is need of our being awakened by God's crying out to us, *Behold*, or *Hearken*. I add further, When God cryes in this manner to us, our Eyes are either clos'd up as were the Blind man's in the Gospel; or else heavy as were the Disciples, whilst Jesus was in his Agony. Our Ears are like those of *Samuel*, when God call'd him at the Tabernacle. In fine therefore he hath reason to cry *Behold*, if He himself does not open our Eyes, as he did *Gehazie's* at the request of 2 Kings, 6. *Elisba*; if he does not anoint in with the Ointment of 17. Grace, as he did the blind man of *Bethsaida*.

Behold, sayes He to the Angel of the Church of *Laodicea*, *I stand at the door*: that is as much as if he had said,

said, O Bishop, O Church of *Laodicea*, though thy Sins are many and great, thy Hypocrisie detestable, thy nakedness shameful, thy poverty pitiful, thy blindness inexcusable, and thy punishment just; though thou hast abused my Gifts, despis'd my Blessings, prophan'd my Image, forgot thy Calling and thy Duty, and consequently made thy self unworthy my taking notice of thee, or coming to visit thee: yet *Behold*, I condescend, I base my self to come even unto thee: *Behold, I stand at the door; and I knock*. Beloved, a thing most strange and worth our greatest Admiration. We read in History, that *Alexander* stoop'd so low as to make a Visit to *Diogenes* in his Tub, that *Pompey* in all his splendour was found standing at the Door of a poor *Posidonius*, that *Cyrus*, *Artaxerxes*, Great *Constantines*, and many other great Emperours and Monarchs have stoop'd their Grandeur, and cover'd Majesty under a veil of humility, familiarity and clemency; things really strange and rare, and worthy to be taken notice of: for we see how reserv'd some Monarchs are in this particular, especially those of *Persia*, *Ethiopia*, *India*, and *China*, who seldom or never communicate themselves to their Subjects; not suffering themselves to be seen, unless at Festivals; or at some extraordinary Solemnities: nor then, but covered with a veil, commanding the Reverence of their astonish'd beholders. But now, *Beloved*, this is far more rare to see the Son of God no longer in the days of his Flesh, and under the form of a Servant; but in an estate of Glory; Him who hath sate at the right hand of God the Father: I say, to see him stand at the door of the poor sinful sons of men. Behold and admire the Holy One of *Israel* the most Just standing at the door of a poor Sinner, the King of Glory at the door of a Beggar, the most True at the door of an Hypocrite; and the Creator of the whole World at the

Heb. 5. 7.

the door of a miserable Creature. *Behold* with astonishment, the Great God laying down his Imperial Crown, not only to make our Approach to him the more free and easie, as the Fable reports *Apollo* did at the approach of *Phaeton*, but even to condescend and as it were Undeifie himself to come to our very doors.

And since the Approaches of Princes and Monarchs are alwayes preceded by Harbingers and Heralds; certainly this of our Saviour's, as *St. John* expresses it, could be no less then with an *is*, a *Behold*. Behold what? Why it followes, *I stand at the door*. Our Saviour is like a faithful Friend, who of his own accord comes to give us some wholesome Advice: like a Charitable Physician who knocks at the door of the Sick, bringing with him an Oyntment to anoint his Eyes: or like one offended, who will not stay for the submission of the Offendor, but most obligingly Anticipates his Submission, by submitting himself first.

Alas! good Lord, if thou had'st staid, or should stay the coming of sinful man, *Adam* would still be hid from before thee, *Abraham* would still remain in his Idolatry, *David* in his Uncleanneſs, *Zacheus* in his Extorsions and Usuries, *Saul* in his Rage and Blasphemies, and the Angel of the Church of *Laodicea* in a weariness in Devotion and Hypocrisie: But thanks be to God the Merciful, thanks to our Lord Jesus, who when the poor Sinner thinks least of it, comes to the very door of a poor *Adam*, *Adam where art thou?* who knocks at the door of an *Abram*, *Abram!* who sends a *Nathan* to *David* to tell him, *Thou art the man*; who ^{2 Sam. 12.7.} smiles upon *Zacheus*, and sayes, *To day I must abide at thy house*; who cryes out to a *Saul*, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* And lastly, awakens a Church in a languishing condition, saying unto her, *Be zealous and repent*. Who prevents us in all our Actions, by his holy

holy grace call'd upon this account, his preventing grace, his preparing grace, his saving grace: That Grace so often oppos'd by the Disciples of a *Pelagius*, so often divided between God and Man, so often restrained by *Cassianus*, and accommodated to their own dispositions and fancies, but since kept up and maintain'd by an *Augustine* and a *Jerome*, and by a great number of worthy Councils: Preach'd above all by the Example and Doctrine of St. *Paul* that Herald of Grace.

And here, Beloved, take notice of three degrees of this Grace: The first is that of which I am going to speak, when the Son of God *Comes* to the door of a poor Sinner; The second, when he *knocks*; The last, where he *stands* at the door and staves a pretty while: And now methinks certainly Man should be ready to go before him, or at least to prepare and make his house fit for the reception of so Divine a Guest. We see Princes and Great Men find alwayes open Gates where e're they come, and are conducted in with ceremony. The Emperour of *Japan* alwayes before his Progress gives an Advertisement of it to his Subjects three years before, to the intent they should prepare for his Reception. And who among us would be so unkind as to let a Father or a Master stay at the Door when they knock? or rather who is the Master or Father that could have the patience to stay knocking so long? Consider, I pray you, the carriage of *Naaman* the General of the Army of the King of *Syria*, he comes to the Door of the Prophet *Elisba* in quality of a Beggar, but nevertheless is in great wrath *because the Man of God came not out*. O the great and wonderful goodness of our Patient Saviour! He stands at the door of a presumptuous sinner, as wretched *Lazarus* at the door of the Rich-man, or a poor suppliant, at the door of some great Favourite or Master of Requests: he suffers a thousand rebukes, he stands languishing not only Months but years: He knocks and knocks again

2 Kings 5.
9, 11.

again but in vain; he employes all his Patience in attending, like the *Master of the Fig-Tree* we read of, the first, second and third, nay even to the fourth year: Or like the Master of that Vine, who after a long and tedious Attendance cries out, *What could have been done more to my Vineyard that I have not done to it?* The Lord staid in expectation a hundred and twenty years before he destroy'd the Old World by the Deluge; he would not confound the Builders of the Tower of *Babel* before the Tower was well advanced in its height: he would not destroy *Pharaoh* until neither Prayers nor Threatnings nor Plagues could mollifie his harden'd heart. And for the most part it is through the Riches of his Bounty, his Patience and Long-suffering that he hath call'd us from time to time, and doth still call us to an acknowledgment of our offences.

I stand at the door, sayes he; which is in the Original, I am *before* the door. The Son of God is often represented to be at home; a mark of his Majesty and his Empire: And thus sometimes he is represented to us as *walking*: Thus he *walks among the seven Candlesticks of Gold*; a mark of his Activity, his Providence and Care of his Church, performing the Office both of a General, a Prince and a Master. Sometimes he is describ'd to us as *descending*; a mark sometimes of his Humility, sometimes of his Anger, and coming to execute his Judgments upon us: At other times he is said to be *standing*, either at the right hand of the Almighty, or among the Golden Candlesticks: the one to signifie unto us his Intercession; the other his gracious Presence and readiness to defend and protect us. Thus he stands sometimes before the doors of Sinners to take notice on one side of their patience, content and long-suffering; on the other, to

Rev. 2. 1.

shew his continual Vigilance and presence, his Eyes being alwayes open, his Ears attentive, his feet alwayes ready and willing to enter into any poor sinner that will open unto him: Thus he does not say, *I have stood at your door*, or, *I will stand*, but, *I do stand at your doors*, according as the Greek expressees it; to shew he is alwayes present at our doors, though they be never so poor and mean: *Present*, I say, though we see him not at all, no more than did *Jacob* at the Vision of the Ladder; *The Eternal God is here*, (sayes he) *and I knew not of it*: *Present*, though we know him no more than did the two Disciples before their eyes were open'd: *Present*, though blind ignorant man cannot comprehend the manner of it; as *Job* sayes, *Behold, he shall go from before me and I shall not see him*. *Present*, though the sensual and senseless man thinks he is far off, and cryes out as the wicked of old, *The Lord hath forsaken the Earth, the Lord shall not see*. Neither is he only present with us constantly; but continually likewise calling upon us, and inviting us; continually offering us his Grace and his Peace; as the Lord said, *I gave her a space to repent*: whether it be at the Eleventh hour, that is to say, at the last hour, as in the Parable; or at the end of a hundred and twenty years, as in the Example of the first World; or after a long Rebellion, as that of *Manasses*.

But methinks, *Beloved*, I see you impatient to know what this Door is at which *Jesus* stands; *I stand at the door*; sayes he; Was it at the door of a *Domitian* sitting upon *Cesar's* Throne? Yea, *Beloved*, but in quality of a Judge; since this Monster persecuted him in the quality of a Saviour, by spilling the blood of his dear Friends *Flavins* and *Domicelle*, for having only open'd the door to our Blessed Saviour. Was it at the Court Gates or Palaces? Yea there likewise, and often

often effectually, as in *Lucius's* time the first King of the *Britains*, as in the Conversion of *Mammia*, *Alexander Severus's* Mother, in the Conversion of *Helen* and *Constantine* her Son: But I must confess he more often stands at these Doors evilly intreated and rebuk'd, rally'd by Sergeants and Curtifans, buffeted by Minions, mocked by *Herods*, and persecuted by *Agrippa's* and *Nero's*. Was it at the doors of the Rich, and the Favourites of the Age? Yes, he hath stood there, and doth stand there still, in the persons of the Poor, of Orphans, of *Lazarus's*. Was it at the door of all men in general? How comes it to pass then that he hath left a great part of the World to walk in their own wayes without any preaching of his Holy Word, without being Call'd, without Grace, not knowing or ever so much as hearing of a Saviour? Was it at the doors of the Wise men of the World? *Beloved*, I must needs say there he hath stood least, knowing that among these sort of Sinners his Word would be esteemed but as folly, his Mysteries ridiculous, his Simplicity dull, and his Humility odious as well as his Precepts; *I give thee thanks, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise, &c.* And we see he hath passed by the doors of *Pythagoras's*, of *Socrates's*, of *Plato's* and *Aristotle's*, of *Cicero's* and *Seneca's*, and the most wise Philosophers, although Antiquity, and some few since have suppos'd the contrary, and that they had a saving light. Was it at the door of the Just or some deserving persons? Alas, *Beloved*, what merit can any one have to receive him, when he comes to knock at the door of an outrageous *Manasses*, a forgetful *David*, a prostitute *Maudlin*, a Prodigal wallowing in his debauches, a *Matthias* turn'd Publican, of a Jew crucifying him, or of a *Saul* persecuting and blaspheming him. *Beloved*, we need no other Example then this in our Text;

He stands at the door particularly of this Church of *Laodicea*, to whom St. *John* addresses his Epistle: And what was (do you think) this Church in those dayes? She was, according to the description made of her by St. *John*, wholly corrupted, fallen from her Faith and her Zeal, fill'd with presumption and hypocrisie, fierce prosperity, proud in her Riches, weary in her Devotion, carnal in her Affections, and vain in her foolish Imaginations: yet nevertheless 'tis to her that our Saviour Addresses himself, *Loe, I am at the door, or rather at thy door, &c.*

I would not have you think that it was at the door of her Temples, or Schools, they have been too often set wide open, since we have seen, and do still see they shut the door of their Attention to our Saviour Jesus Christ; And their Gates are no more the Gates of *Bethel*, but the Gates of *Bethaven*, houses of vanity.

It is no more now, *Lift up your heads, O ye Gates, that the King of Glory may come in*; but, *Bow down your heads, O ye gates, for the Glory of the world will come into the Holy Place.* Jesus does not say, I stand at the Doors of those houses who lodged the Members of this Church: but few houses have had the honour visibly to receive our Redeemer: *Abram's* had once, and since that *Matthias's*, *Zachew's*, *Martha's*, and blessed *Mary's*, who from thence forward may well cry out with *Jacob*, *How dreadful is this place, it is none other than the House of God, and the Gate of Heaven.*

Gen. 28.
17.

Ezek. 12.
22.

'Twas in the Infancy of the World that he vouchsaf'd to stand at our Earthly material doors, sprinkled with the mysterious blood of the Passeever; 'tis enough for us that he stands at ours as a Guard or Sentinel, making them Houses of Peace, Houses of Prayer; there where lodge the true Sons of *Abraham*; there where the Blood of Jesus Christ is sprinkled, upon the door-posts of our Hearts, and our Souls purify'd

rify'd with the Hyssop of Grace, There where we see *Rahabs* mystical scarlet line fasten'd to our windows and Avenues, a mark of Grace and Charity.

Lastly, *Beloved*, it is not at the doors of our Ears that this Blessed God stands; they are open with little pain; rather they stand alwayes wide open: and but few refuse at least to hear of Christ Jesus. Nay, this door the very Scribes and Pharisees; the *Herods* and *Pilats*, the *Agrippa's* and *Felix's* are alwayes ready to open: And, *Beloved*, the truth is, this is the first door should be open'd to him; for as the Apostle sayes, *Faith comes by hearing*; but that is but the fore-door: the Wide gate opens as well to the Devil, the World and Seducers, as to our Saviour; and we may easily see our Saviour never meant that door, when he sayes a little further in the same Epistle, *Whosoever hath Ears to hear, let him hear*: for Rom. 10. 17. there he means the ears of the Heart.

By this, *Brethren*, we may easily see our Saviour meant the doors of our hearts, which is as a back-door, as the Door of some Privy Chamber; the door of the Bride-Chamber, at which our Beloved knocks: And now do you think our Saviour would be satisfy'd if we only open unto him the other doors, the doors of our Temples, the doors of our Ears, or those of our Eyes or Mouthes; no, the very Devil himself is not satisfied with that: even he looks for an opening of the doors of our hearts; sometimes he knocks by one sort of Passion or Temptation, sometimes by another.

Our Passions, *Beloved*, are the Devils Harbingers, they go before him to prepare his Quarters: our Eyes and Ears are the doors at which he enters: And as for the Heart, which is as the Garrison of the Soul, he never fails of one Stratagem or other to make himself Master of it: If he cannot get into the Heart of a *David*. during

ring his Adversity, he will be sure to rush in upon him in his Prosperity; if he cannot enter into the heart of a *Moses* by his Idolatry, he will be sure to do it by his Unbelief; if he cannot debauch a *Lot* among the *Sodomites*, he will among his own Daughters. Thus he won *Eli* by his too great indulgence to his own Children, *Ezekias* by his Pride; *Peter* by his fear: and lastly, every one, by some weakness, some infirmity he finds in them, which he quickly spies out and discovers with a great deal more ease than *Dalila* did *Sampson's*. Wonder not then, my *Beloved*, if the Son of God chiefly requires our hearts to be open'd unto him: *This Gate*, sayes the Prophet, *shall be shut, and no man shall enter in by it but the God of Israel.* *This*, as one may say, is *God's Gate*, a Gate of *Righteousness*; we may well call it the *Beautiful*, as long as our Saviour finds it so, and cryes out, *Behold, thou art fair my Beloved, behold, &c.* This is the true Water-Gate, of which *Nehemiah* speaks, out of which flow those living waters, *those waters which flow from the house of God*, and the Heavenly Sanctuary; this is the door of God's Garden of *Eden*, which ought continually to be kept and guarded by Cherubims: This is the Chamber of the Bride, which ought to be impregnable but to the true Bridegroom of our Souls; the door of the Treasury, at which none ought to have access but our Saviour, who is not onely the Lord Treasurer, but even the Treasure it self. This door of our hearts where Christ stands, is the very Centre of Man, the Centre of his Desires and Actions: And as we see he hath immur'd and secur'd this noble part with a Membrane, a Midriff and Water round about on every side, even as a Castle is fortify'd with Bulwarks, Intrenchments, and Pallisado's: Thus God looks upon the Heart of man as his Cittadel, his Palace, where we ought continually to keep a strong Garrison,

Ezek. 44. 3.

Psal. 118.

19.

Acts 3. 2.

Nehem. 3.
26.

Garrison, that none may enter in but him whom we should love with all our Hearts, with all our Souls.

Beloved, at this very day in Superstitious *Rome*, in the Year of *Jubile*, upon *Easter-Eve*, the *Pope* in his Pontifical Robes is carried to one of the Gates of *St. Peter*, which is never open'd but at such times; he knocks gently with a Silver Hammer, until at the third knock the Door, being so design'd on purpose, falls open in a hundred pieces, which the Admiring people gather up with great Labour and Devotion! By this Act pretending to be Christ's Vicar, and to have power of opening and shutting the Gate of Grace, according to his good will and pleasure. Oh that this True, this Great Vicar of our Souls our Saviour Jesus Christ, would as easily break open these doors of our Hearts: If he hath open'd our earthly doors though barricado'd never so fast; if he have of old open'd the Doors from above, the Cataracts and Flood-Gates of Heaven, the Bowels of the Earth, the Ears of the Deaf, the Eyes of the Blind, and the Graves of the Dead: if he only hath the *Key of David*, that Key which opens and none shuts, and shuts and none opens; if he can only speak the word and 'tis done, as confessed the Centurion: I say, *Beloved*, if he hath done or can do this, you may be assur'd, when he is pleas'd to say the word, he can set wide open this mystical door at which he now stands knocking. And I have often wondred that the *Jews* who ascrib'd only to God the Key of Rain, the Key of Nourishment, the Key of the Grave, and the Key of the Womb; that they should forget and omit the Key of the Heart. And we need no other Example than of a *Paul* or some other of the Disciples to convince us that our Saviour knowes both how to knock and open at the same time: yet nevertheless he is pleas'd sometimes according to his wise dispensation

to

to proceed gradually in this work of Grace: He knocks divers times, and in divers manners, according to the difference of the subject, making a distinction between those who are mark'd with his Seal, and those not; between *Egypt* and *Goshen*, *Esau* and *Jacob*, *Ishmael* and *Isaac*; as he doth between *Laban's* sheep and those of *Israel*: making a difference likewise where he intends either to convert gently, or with force to vanquish a poor Sinner: The one he does at the first knock, the other at the third, sometimes at the last hour.

And now, *Beloved*, if you ask me how and what are the blows with which Christ knocks? I must tell you, in my Opinion, these are the greatest: He knocks after the manner of the *Lacedemonians*, who cry out in the Streets with a loud voice when they would enter in; he cries with a strong voice, in the first place by the voice of his Law, when he Thunders and Lightens from Mount *Sinai*, making Sinners understand the holiness of his Laws, the Majesty of a Law-giver, the sense of their sins, the number of their Transgressions, the severity of his Justice, the terribleness of his Anger, and his Judgments, and the Eternity of his Punishments: A Voice, a Knock, enough to astonish the most obdurate Sinner; a Voice at which *Adam* hides himself, *Cain* flies away, the People in the Desert Tremble, *Belshazzar* and his Retinue stand amaz'd, *Daniel* loses his strength, and his Companions are afraid. And who e're, says *Augustine*, does not awake at his Thunder, he is not asleep but dead.

In the second place, He knocks at our Doors by Troubles, and by the remorse of Conscience: and this Knock, *Beloved*, is without noise, we hear it not; and this is call'd in Scripture a dreadful sound, a cry as of a woman in Travail: greater far than the roaring of a troubled Sea, or of a rouz'd Lion; these are as the se-

cret Reproaches of an Accuser, or the Questions and Interrogatories of a Judge, when our Consciences are prick'd, or like the Depositions of an urgent witness, or like the Sentence of a Judge decreeing bitter things against an Offender: And this is the sad doleful voice that knocks without ceasing at the Ears and Heart of a *Cain*, a *Saul*, or a perfidious *Achitophel*, at the Ears of a Trayterous *Judas*, a profane *Tiberias*, a Parricide *Nero*, or a wicked *Caracalla*. Moreover, Jesus knocks sometimes by the voice of his Chastisements, by the approaches of his Judgments, and who is there among you that does not know this was true in the Imprisonment of *Joseph's* Brethren, in the Bondage of the Children of *Israel*, in a *Manasses* in Chains, in the Judgments pronounced against *Nineveh*, and lastly, by Sicknes and Diseases, by all which he drawes us unto him. He Knocks likewise at our doors by those Examples he daily puts before our eyes, and these are either Examples of Virtue for our Imitation, as the Patience of *Job*, the Chastity of a *Joseph*, the Zeal of a *David*, and the constant Perseverance of so many Disciples and Martyrs, enrich'd with his Grace, and long since Crown'd with his Glory: Or they are Examples of Wickedness for our avoidance, as the Abomination of *Sodom*, the Sacrilege of *Achan*, the Covetousness of *Nabal*, the Impiety of *Abfalon*, the Perfidiousness of *Jezabel*, and an infinite number besides of the like Sinners. And to be short, as the time obliges me, know, That this Charitable Saviour Knocks likewise by his Blessings, his Graces, his Patience and Long-suffering, by the Testimonies of his Providence, by his Kindness and Compassion, by the Riches of his Bounty, and proofs of his Clemency. Know likewise above all this, He Knocks at our doors, when he blows his Trumpet from *Mount Sinai*, the Trumpet of the Gospel, by the preaching of his Word, and the Voice

2 Cor. 6.
14.

of his Oracles, and his proffering his Mediation for a Peace; *To day* (sayes he) *if you will hear his Voice, harden not your hearts*: And this is a glorious advantage but few have received it, an Advantage deny'd heretofore to many Nations and People; deny'd to a proud *Tyre*, and an haughty *Babylon*; an imperious *Rome*, a Rich *Ophyr*; and still deny'd to a great part of the habitable World, to whom either the Voice of his Word is not at all come; or if come not understood, no more than the Language of *Canaan* to the *Egyptians*; or else disguis'd and veil'd by Forgers of Lies, false Prophets, and such as sacrifice to *Baal*, who joy'n Christ with *Belial*, and light with darkness, and the worship of Idols with that of the true God.

Gen. 11:7.

Acts 9. 5.

But, *Beloved*, after all this I must avouch, That all these Knocks are but in vain, unless the same Jesus knocks at our Hearts with the Hammer of his Holy Spirit: if he doth not touch our hearts as he did *Jacob's Thigh*; if he does not draw us and thrust us along, and quicken us even as in the beginning of the Creation he breath'd the spirit of life into *Adam* by which he became a living man; or as he rais'd those who were dead, as we read in the Gospel: he must make the heavenly light of his Grace shine in us, that we may see and distinguish our Lord God who knocks, *Who art thou, Lord?* and he answered, *I am Jesus whom thy sins have persecuted*: He must pour into our Souls the Oyl of Grace, that is, the desire of Peace, a holy Belief and Confidence in his Merits; then we shall cry out and say, *Good Lord I am ready, what is it thou would'st have me to do!*

Beloved, I could wish with all my heart, our Saviour in like manner would knock at every one of our hearts this day: Alas! hitherto he hath wearied himself with knocking and calling unto us by the voice of his Ministers and Prophets: He hath knock'd too long at
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our Gates by a Continual Flourishing Prosperity; so great, that it hath been as a Sign and a Wonder unto all the World. He hath knock'd too by the Glorious Effects of his Long-suffering, having spar'd you as so many *Zois*, as his Well-beloved Children, in the day of his Wrath and Visitation. Nay, *Beloved*, those many and sundry Blessings which he hath pour'd out upon your Towns, your Provinces, your Persons and Families; with which he hath blessed your Labours and Enterprizes; so many times as he hath preserv'd your Fleets, made your Armies Successful, enrich'd your Towns, and brought into your Ports, whatsoever the Sea or Land, whatsoever both *Indies* or *Arabia* could afford; the rich products both of Nature and Art: I say, have not all these things been as so many blows by which our Saviour hath knock'd at our doors even in the face of all *Europe*? I add further, hath he not knock'd and knock'd again at our doors, by raging Plagues, Pestilential Feavers, and other new unknown Diseases, which have been as Fire sent immediately from Heaven to consume us? Hath he not knock'd at our doors by Wars and rumours of Wars & the like, which have as so many blows defaced your stately Pillars and Roofs? Hath he not knock'd by Divisions and Breaches among our selves: by the ill success or some little defect or other in your Councils, your Policies and Military Discipline? Nay, hath he not sufficiently knock'd at our doors, by his last Viol of Wrath he hath so plentifully pour'd out upon us, when since we would not open the doors of our Hearts to him, he hath broke down our *Sluces*, the Doors which were always shut against that merciless Element which he hath now brought in among us?

O miraculous Blindness! Will an Ambitious man alwayes have his Doors and Gates open to Great men, a Merchant his to any by whom he may gain? will a Luxurious man alwayes have his open to Pleasure? and shall we poor Sinners let our Saviour stand knocking at our Gates, who comes to tender us his Grace and Love? nay, shall we send

Luk. 24.
11.

him away ignominiously as did *Herod*; or harden our Hearts as the stiff-necked *Jewes*, who refus'd his Grace? Beloved, for the most part if we open our doors to this Great God, what are they? they are but the doors of our Ears or our Churches; nor Alas them neither, but for some few moments of time, it may be an hour or so: and then too to adjourn till another time with *Festus*. There be but few who open to our Saviour the true Gate, the Gate of a holy Contrition, the Gate of an unfeigned Faith, and the Gate of a filial Obedience, saying with *Jairus*, *Come Lord, enter into my house*; or with *Samuel*, *Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth*.

Luk. 8. 41.

1 Sam. 3.
10.

Poor Mortals! that cannot discern who it is that stands thus knocking at their doors! that cannot see the Riches of his Bounty and Long-suffering waiting upon them! But Beloved, the time will come, that he will change his Patience into Anger, his Rods into Barrs of Iron, and knock no longer as a Friend, but as a Judge: The time will come when he will withdraw his Holy Spirit from us, together with his Ark, his Tabernacle and his Prophets. *Behold*, (sayes the same Jesus) *the time shall come when you shall see me no more, and your houses shall become desolate*: He will suffer us in like manner to knock at the door of Grace in vain; and with the Spouse complain, *I sought him, but found him not; I call'd, but he answer'd me not*.

Luk. 13. 35.

My Beloved, But few have those awful apprehensions of the Approach of our Lord and Saviour which they ought to have: If a Person of Quality should stand at our doors, we see it drawes Reverence from us, and the approach of a Judge or an Earthly Father keeps us in fear and respect: Nay, the very Heathens did respect the very Images of a *Cesar*, or their Princes: how pleasant is the company of the Physician to the Patient? and how ravishing to a poor Criminal is the Messenger who brings his Pardon? O Blessed Saviour, how then should the good Tydings of thy being at our doors stir up in us on the one side a holy fear, when we consider thy Purity and Greatness;

ness; on the other side Comfort, when we consider thy Mercy and Loving kindness. And though there be some who alwayes imagine thee to be afar off, as *Judah* did in the time of *Ezekiel*; Others who think thou sleepest, as the Disciples when thou wert in the Ship: And some, who imagine thou art as Senseless as their false gods, their Images; Yet, O Lord, do thou vouchsafe to be with us still; nay so near, that we may even see thee face to face, and kiss thy hand. Ezek. 9. 9.
A. 17. 17.

Alas, *Beloved*, 'tis not above five or six years since that our Neighbouring Town little imagin'd their Angry Judge stood so near her very Gates; when she saw her sweet Streams infected, her Air turn'd into Pestilential, her People and Inhabitants languishing, and her Palaces forsaken: Nay, 'tis not many Months since this *High and Mighty* little dream't her declination, her Ruine was so near, that she should behold her Beauty trodden under foot, her Crown turn'd Topside-Turvy, her Strong-Holds and Castles surpriz'd and taken one after the other; that she should see her Provinces in Bondage, her Seven Arrows dis-united, her Treasures and Exchequers exhausted, her Liberty infrin'g'd, her Strength confounded; She little imagin'd ever to behold the Ark of God taken Captive, her Churches dissipated, her Temples prophan'd and turn'd into houses of *Dagon*, or into Prisons and Magazins. Nay, how many are there of our Towns and Cities that never imagin'd in the least that the Destroying Angel was so near their Doors and Gates, and that he stood there ready with Arms of destruction, when all of a suddain they have beheld their Houses, their Ships all on fire, themselves expos'd to the mercy of a Ravenous Enemy, or an insolent Souldier, to the cruelty of Barbarians. But to come to this very place where we now are, *Beloved*, hath it not been a Shambles of Slaughter and Blood; have we not seen those *Hamans* who thought themselves establish'd firm enough, and who were ready to say in their hearts, *I am seated in a sure place, and who shall sling me out?* I say,

have:

have we not seen them Massacred in a cruel manner? have they not been most ignominiously treated, and cut to pieces, when they little imagin'd they had been so near the Gates of their own Sepulchres?

But to come yet nearer, *Beloved*, a thing I am sure still fresh in every one of your memories; have we not seen, as if the Almighty had forgot his Covenant, our little World under Water; when the merciless Waves over-ran our pleasant places, and our sweet Gardens, more terrible for the time than those of *Noah*? Have we not beheld Sluces, our Bulwarks which we thought Impregnable, broken down; our Houses destroyed, and with them our Merchandizes and Wares inestimable? And yet blessed be God we have been as in the Ark: out of which we may behold God smiling upon us still, we see the Dove returning with the Olive-branch, and the Waters decreasing. How then should these things carry our hearts into Pious Thoughts and Meditations; how should every one in particular cry out with the Prodigal, *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.*

Beloved, The same God which heretofore cryed out to the most famous Church of *Laodicea*, when she was at the very point of destruction, I say 'tis the same God which calls out to you, saying to you, O People of *Holland*! Loe, I stand at your doors and I knock. I say, he is still at your doors, Angry that he hath knockt so long in vain: he knocks still, but in wrath; he calls out still, but with a Voice of Thunder: and as far as we know, this is the last Advertisement, the sixth Trumpet. And yet after all this he displayes his White Banner his Flagg of Peace; he still offers us his grace, 'tis time still to let him in; and to repent; the seventh Viol of his Wrath is not yet pour'd forth; the great Voice hath not yet pronounced from Heaven, *'Tis done.* You have, I confess *Beloved*, made a pretty good beginning towards opening your doors to the Almighty, by your Prayers, your Devotions, and your Alms. In like manner he hath on his behalf begun to Enter

ter in by the visible and miraculous Effects of his Providence; by the conduct and preservation of your Ships and Fleets, in the favourableness of the Winds, and in the sudden retreat of your Enemies who not long since molested your Coasts; in the Exaltation of our Young *David*, and in the strength of a firm *League*: I say, *Beloved*, he is still entering in by the inclining the hearts of Enemies, and mediating for a Peace. We have had some among us, I confess, who have been too forward to let in an Earthly Master, a fierce Conquerour, who have betray'd our Towns and Cities into the hands of Idolaters: But Brethren, who can we open our doors to with more safety and security, and more honour, than to the Lord our Saviour. Yea, Lord, thou art ready to Enter still into our Provinces, into our Towns and Houses, as their former Ancient Protector; as a Messenger of Peace and Herald of Grace: nay, Thou art not only ready to enter in unto us, but even to stay and to sup with us; having Invited this *Honourable Assembly* on the next Lords Day to sup with Thee; the greatest mark without doubt of thy Friendship, Familiarity and Communion: There where thou didst of old open the Eyes of thy Disciples after thou hadst broke Bread, 'tis there thou hast promis'd to stay with us, nay to dwell with us; but more especially in the Night of our Afflictions.

Sayes *Simon Peter* unto our Saviour, *Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man!* And the Centurion touch'd with a sense of his unworthiness, sayes, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof!* O Blessed Saviour! we have as much or more reason than any of them to cry out and pray that thou wouldst not come among us poor Sinners, who have no place fit for thy reception, no place unless a stable, a withdrawing Room only fit for unclean Beasts; no place, a poor house neither swept nor garnish'd: And yet, O Lord, that we are sinful men, is the greatest Argument, the greatest encouragement for us to call and cry out to thee, *Come near; Good Lord, unto us, enter*

Luk. 5. 8.

ter in untous; for even so, O Lord, thou dwellest, thou art among the wicked daily, among *Matthias's* and *Zachens's*, among the feeble and spiritually sick: and 'tis thy work only to make thy grace abound where sin aboundeth; to sanctifie the most defiled hearts; to mollifie the most obdurate; to Tame the most rebellious; and of their impure habitations, to make a Temple for thy Holy Spirit. But why, good Lord, shouldst thou stand at our doors so long? Why shouldst thou knock so many months, so many years, and all in vain? No, no, knock no more we beseech thee, stand we pray thee no longer at our barricado'd doors expecting entrance; cry no more from thy Sanctuary, *Loe! Behold!* for alas! we are blind; How should we see, or know thee? We are deaf, how should we hear thy voice? We are all Paraliticks and lame. how should we go to let thee in? But rather, O Lord, we pray thee open thou the doors of our hearts and enter in, since thou alone hast the true Key, the *Key of David*; since there is nothing can resist thy powerful grace: Nay, Good God, instead of knocking only at these doors which are lock'd and barr'd, break e'm down, O Lord, batter e'm to shivers, demolish e'm, pull them from off the very hooks by the very force of thine Arm, and drive out of this thy Temple those who buy and sell: Drive away, we pray thee, those unclean spirits that inhabit there; those mutinous and rebellious Passions that are still standing at the very doors and entries of our Hearts to hinder thy coming in.

And now, *Beloved*, would you be satisfy'd whether Jesus hath knock'd in vain among us? would you know if he hath open'd the door himself, or no? Whether he be come in, in Grace or no? Or whether he be come to Visit only, or to stay and dwell with us? Take notice then, I beseech you, of these few Marks and Signs which I am going to lay down before you:

Beloved, when Jesus comes into any State or Commonwealth, into any House or any Heart, he presently sayes, *Peace be unto you*: He is no sooner entred but he appea-

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ses their Troubled Spirits, drives away their Fears, unites their Discords and Divisions, and makes a Calm throughout, yea, a Calm of Joy.

Where there is this happy Opening of our Hearts, presently we see whole *Legions* of Covetousness and Passions to fly out: but shut up again against the Tentations of the Devil and the World, and never to open but at the kind Entreaties of the Spirit of God, and of Grace; even as the Naturalists observe, That the mother of Pearl never opens it self but to receive the Morning dew, and the Beams of the Rising Sun.

There where this Divine Redeemer is once entred in, we keep that place apart that none come into it but him; Even as at this day 'tis the Custome among some Eastern Countries in their Palaces and Houses to keep a certain Door, one certain Apartment, wherein no person but their Prince must enter in or abide.

*Bacon, descr.
of Sapp.
Beg.*

Wheresoever this *Divine Guest* makes his Abode, there is a daily Communion with him in Holy Meditation, in Prayers, and abundance of every work of Grace.

Wheresoever this Merciful Lord is received with Joy, there his Friends likewise are welcome; those, I mean, of his Train, those who wear his Livery, *viz.* the Poor and Needy. And as often as such are at our Gates, we ought to imagine that our Saviour himself is there; that 'tis he who knocks and demands our Charity, and our Offerings: for even so the Saints of Old Times have us'd Hospitality; They have Entertain'd Angels unawares: 'Tis there that the Saviour of our Souls is entred in with Efficacy: and we must believe as often as we come to the Lord's Table, that he comes to Sup with us, and to make us Sup with him. For which we must prepare our selves at least with as much pains as *Mephibosheth* did for to dine with *David*, or *Jacob* with *Joseph*.

Heb. 12. 2.

Wherefore, Good Christians, I am bound to Exhort
E you,

Luk. 24.
32.

you, since you are within a very few dayes, to present your selves, at the Table of the True *Joseph*, and at the Myſterious Banquet of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; to come prepar'd with Hearts fit for his Reception: Oh thrice Bleſſed! if when he breaks the Bread to you by the hands of his Faithful Miniſters, your Hearts burn within you as did the Diſciples; if then your Eyes are open'd as was *Jonathan's*, and your Souls full of Comfort as was *Jacob's*, who ſaid, *Now let me dye ſince I have ſeen thy face.* And then what Comfort will it be to us to ſee our Saviour face to face; not at an Earthly Table, but that of his Heavenly Palace; not at a Banquet in Commemoration only of his Death, but at the Eternal Triumphant Banquet of the holy Lamb: And then how will a Devout Soul rejoyce, I ſay, to ſee this Spouſe ſtanding at our doors? But more eſpecially when Death ſtands there, his laſt Herald, his laſt Meſſenger, then when our Souls ſhall be demanded of us from the hands of our Bleſſed Saviour; when our Conſciences ſhall be adjourned till the Day of Judgment, and the Catalogue of our Sins and Tranſgreſſions diſplay'd and open'd; Then, I ſay, our Souls which are Cœleſtial will take their flight towards Heaven, to the Sanctuary of Glory; to enter in at that Gate, that Place, where they ſhall continually be Delighted, and Satisfy'd with thoſe Enter-tainments, which none but Angels enjoy in that Heavenly Paradice for evermore. *Amen.*

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